

## Corporate Parenting Committee

Tuesday 21 February 2012

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02C - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

### Membership

Councillor Catherine McDonald (Chair)  
Councillor Lisa Rajan (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Barrie Hargrove  
Councillor Claire Hickson  
Councillor Eliza Mann  
Councillor Rosie Shimell  
Councillor Althea Smith  
Barbara Hills

### Reserves

Councillor Poddy Clark  
Councillor Patrick Diamond  
Councillor Helen Hayes  
Councillor Wilma Nelson

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### INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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#### Access to information

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#### Contact

Bola Roberts 020 7525 7232 or Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395

Or email: [bola.roberts@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:bola.roberts@southwark.gov.uk); [paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk)

Webpage: <http://www.southwark.gov.uk>

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Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

#### Eleanor Kelly

Acting Chief Executive

Date: 13 February 2012



# Corporate Parenting Committee

Tuesday 21 February 2012

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02C - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

## Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	<b>MOBILE PHONES</b>	
	Mobile phones should be turned off or put on silent during the course of the meeting.	
	<b>PART A - OPEN BUSINESS</b>	
	<b>STAY SAFE THEME</b>	
1.	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
	To receive any apologies for absence.	
2.	<b>CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS</b>	
	A representative of each political group will confirm the voting members of the committee.	
	To agree the appointment of non-voting co-opted member Gordon McCullough (Community Action Southwark).	
3.	<b>NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT</b>	
	In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear days of the meeting.	
4.	<b>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</b>	
	Members to declare any personal interests and dispensation in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
5.	<b>MINUTES</b>	1 - 4

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 8 November 2011.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>PRESENTATION ON NEW ADOPTION REGULATIONS</b>	
	7.00pm – 7.15pm	
<b>7.</b>	<b>ADOPTION SERVICE INSPECTION REPORT</b>	5 - 7
	7.15pm – 7.45pm	
<b>8.</b>	<b>OFSTED INSPECTION OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE IN DECEMBER 2011</b>	8 - 25
	7.45pm – 7.55pm	
<b>9.</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11</b>	26 - 39
	7.55pm – 8.15pm	
<b>10.</b>	<b>CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH (CAMHS) - CARELINK</b>	40 - 46
	8.15pm – 8.25pm	
<b>11.</b>	<b>LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND OFFENDING</b>	47 - 52
	8.25pm – 8.35pm	
<b>12.</b>	<b>CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2011/12</b>	53 - 56
	8.35pm – 8.40pm	

**ANY OTHER OPEN BUSINESS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.**

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following motion should be moved, seconded and approved if the sub-committee wishes to exclude the press and public to deal with reports revealing exempt information:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure rules of the Constitution.”

**Item No.**

**Title**

**Page No.**

**PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS**

**ANY OTHER CLOSED BUSINESS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF  
THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.**

Date: 13 February 2012



## Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Tuesday 8 November 2011 at 2.00 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Catherine McDonald (Chair)  
Councillor Barrie Hargrove  
Councillor Claire Hickson  
Councillor Eliza Mann  
Barbara Hills

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Rajan, Althea Smith and Rosie Shimell.

### 2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The members listed as presented were confirmed as the voting members for the meeting.

### 3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

### 4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

### 5. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED:

That the open minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the chair.

**6. CHILDREN IN CARE ACCESSING LEISURE PARTNERSHIP****RESOLVED:**

1. That the revised and improved partnership with Fusion for a further 3 year period from April 2011 be noted.
2. That the revised use and allocation of a pupil premium for each child in care be noted.
3. That the ongoing framework for supporting additional sport and leisure activities for all school age looked after children as part of the "Being Healthy" agenda be noted.

**7. COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE****RESOLVED:**

1. That the updated Commissioning Strategy for Children in Care (Appendix 1 of the report) be noted setting out the key priorities for:
  - redirecting resources to reduce the need for children coming into care when safe to do so
  - improving outcomes for children in care
  - improving the quality and value for money of services for children in care.
2. That any future reports back seek to clarify the cohorts of students who do go on to do GCSE and A levels.

**8. PERFORMANCE REPORT, SERVICES FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER****RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That officers undertake a detailed analysis of the factors involved in the speed and placement of children for adoption and a report be received back to the committee in February 2012.

**9. FOSTERING SERVICES - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE****RESOLVED:**

1. That the Southwark's Fostering Service Statement of Purpose (as required under National Fostering Regulations, Appendix 1 of the report) be noted.
2. That the statement of purpose for the Southwark Fostering Service will be reviewed and submitted to the corporate parenting committee on an annual basis be noted.

3. That the Southwark's Fostering Services current strong performance for delivering good outcomes for children placed with the service (Appendix 2 of the report ) be noted.
4. That following the fostering inspection due shortly, a report be brought back on the outcome and any issues arising to the committee in February 2012.

## **10. ADOPTION SERVICE REPORT**

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the revised Adoption Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide to Adoption which reflects changes in regulations, statutory guidance and National Minimum Standards as well as the restructure of the service from 1 April 2011 (Appendix 1 of the report) be noted.
2. That the annual report provided for corporate parenting committee on the adoption service for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 and mid year report 1 April 2011 – 30 September 2011 (Appendices 2 and 3 of the report) be noted.
3. That officers undertake a detailed analysis of the cohort of children due for adoption, examining all relevant issues, including health needs and demographic factors that might be pertinent to the speed of the adoption process report back to the committee in February 2012.
4. That Dr. Anthony Tam be invited to the February 2012 committee to talk about his experience and knowledge on health issues facing children waiting for adoption.

## **11. UPDATE ON SOUTHWARK COLLEGE COURSES AND THE PREFERENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

### **RESOLVED:**

1. The it be noted that:
  - Southwark College has an agreement in place that all looked after children and care leavers will be guaranteed an interview for an appropriate course at the College (who wish to have one
  - Significant development has taken place at the college to develop a vocational curriculum that has been co-designed with local employers to better meet local employment needs
  - A specialist dyslexia centre for post 16 looked after children has been opened at the college in partnership with the council.
2. That the Principal of the College be invited to attend the corporate parenting committee meeting next year to report back on the impact of these changes.

**12. REVIEW AND MONITOR OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF THE FEE REGIME**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the information be noted.
2. That the committee receive a report back in September 2012 in order to monitor the situation relating to any likely impacts on access to higher education in light of the change in the fee regime.

**13. PUPIL PERFORMANCE IN 2010/11 AND THE DEVELOPMENTS LINKED TO SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN IN CARE**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the information in the report be noted.
2. That officers (head of specialist education and virtual head) write to the post 16 educational provision (school, colleges and other institutions) that are attended by Southwark children to commend the priority currently accorded to looked after children within the admissions process and to seek assurance that this will continue in order to continue to build upon improvements in results for these children.

**14. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2011/12**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the work plan for 2011/12 as set out in paragraph 5 of the report be agreed.
2. That officers include as part of the 'Be Healthy' theme in July 2012 the issue relating HIV infection rates among young people in developed countries.

The meeting ended at 4.00pm.

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**



<b>Item No.</b> 7.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 21 February 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Adoption Service Inspection Report	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the results of a full Ofsted adoption inspection which took place from 9 – 12 January 2012.
2. To note and agree ongoing requirements placed upon the Corporate Parenting Committee outlined in the new adoption regulations April 2011.
3. To note that the Ofsted Adoption Inspection was GOOD whilst noting several key areas were outstanding.

### KEY MESSAGES

4. The corporate parenting committee in November 2011 requested a “deep dive review” of the Adoption Service in light of significant media and government interest/profile.
5. Whilst Southwark had been anticipating an inspection of adoption before the end of March 2012, on the 16 December, Ofsted confirmed that they wished to undertake an adoption inspection from 9 – 12 January 2012. This constituted less than 4 weeks notice which included the Christmas and New Year break. NB: the recent fostering inspection had provided 8 weeks notice. Ofsted is currently considering whether future inspections should have no notice.
6. The adoption inspection methodology included a comprehensive practice and file review of all open adoption cases and all children/adopters brought before the monthly adoption panel since September 2011. It was felt that to avoid duplication and additional work, the Ofsted inspection should replace the internal “deep dive review” of Southwark’s Adoption Service requested by the Corporate Parenting Committee in November 2011.
7. The Inspectors provided verbal feedback on 12 January 2011 confirming their findings that Southwark’s Adoption Service was an overall “good” and outstanding in one area. A further update will be given at the meeting.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

8. Southwark's Adoption Service is delivered primarily through the Adoption and Permanence Team. It is part of the Children Looked After (CLA) Business Unit in the Children's Specialist Services (CSS). The Service has a key role to play in meeting CSS's strategic aims in relation to:
  - Providing permanent families and placement stability for children in care
  - Reducing the number of children in care by adopting children from care;
9. Southwark is an approved adoption agency under the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (amended 2011) and the service undertakes key functions as set out in the Statement of Purpose 2011/12 which was presented to the previous committee in November.
10. Significant changes to the management and structure of service delivery in respect of adoption were implemented from April 2011. The Adoption and Fostering Service Manager and the Adoption and Permanence Team Manager retired in Autumn 2010. The Service was reorganised and the Adoption and Permanence Team moved to the management of the Service Manager for children in care 0-12 years. This was both to meet the requirements of renewed regulation, statutory guidance and National Minimum Standards relating to all aspects of CLA, and to respond to the need to reduce costs. In doing so this created a natural synergy with social work teams heavily involved in the above strategic aims particularly around adoption.
11. Adoption is one of the most highly regulated and high profile areas of childcare practice. It has received increased national political scrutiny. An adoption order irrevocably transfers full parental responsibility for a child to a new parent and therefore is a very carefully considered process.
12. Adoption performance (adoption and special guardianship orders granted) is reported to the Department for Education (DfE) on an annual basis as part of the set of performance indicators relating to children in public care. Southwark's adoption performance is then benchmarked against other similar local authorities.
13. In November 2011 Southwark's Adoption Service presented its mid year report (2011/12) and revised statement of purpose for committee approval.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

14. The Adoption regulations April 2011 expect Corporate Parenting to receive the following reports each year
  - 1) End of Year Adoption and Permanence Report
  - 2) Mid year Progress Report
  - 3) Revised and updated (if considered necessary) statement of purpose.
15. It is therefore proposed that any changes to the Adoption Statement of Purpose will be submitted each year (at the same time as) the end of year annual report.

16. The corporate parenting committee work plan will schedule committee agenda's to receive the end of year and mid year adoption reports.
17. It is expected that the Ofsted formal letter outlining its inspection findings and recommendations will be available by mid February 2012.
18. A summary of the inspection recommendations (obtained from verbal feedback on 12 January) will be given at the committee meeting.
19. This considerable achievement should also be viewed alongside the result of the Ofsted inspection of Southwark's fostering service which took place in December 2011 – assessed as "good" with outstanding features.

### Policy implications

20. Ensure Adoption reports to the Corporate Parenting Committee are compliant with regulations

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Adoption Statement of Purpose	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Chris Saunders, Head of Services for Children in Care 020 7525 1039

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

### AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson Deputy Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
<b>Report Author</b>	Chris Saunders, Head of Services for Children in Care	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	7 February 2012	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES /CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	7 February 2012	

<b>Item No.</b> 8.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 21 February 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Ofsted Inspection of the Fostering Service in December 2011	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note that Ofsted carried out an announced inspection of the Fostering Service on 12 – 14 December 2011.
2. To note that the report on the inspection was received on 17 January 2012, confirming that Ofsted had given the Fostering Service an overall quality rating of GOOD, noting many areas of the service that the inspectors considered to be of outstanding quality (Ofsted letter – Appendix 1).
3. To note the action plan (set out in paragraph 13 below) to address the three recommendations made by Ofsted for securing future improvement of the service.

## KEY MESSAGES

4. The fostering service was inspected by two Ofsted inspectors over the three day period 12 – 14 December 2011. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000. The Department provided Ofsted with a detailed self assessment and other background documentation in advance of the inspection. The inspectors said that they considered the self assessment to have been extremely helpful, with relevant data, plenty of evidence in relation to the National Minimum Standards and strong on analysis of strengths and areas for development.
5. The department sent out questionnaires, as requested, on behalf of Ofsted to all looked after children and young people, their parents or guardians, all foster carers, the children's social workers and partner organisations. The inspectors reported a good response and noted that the feedback was "overwhelmingly positive".
6. During the three days the inspectors spent in the department they visited four foster placements, met with a wide range of staff, visited the Aftercare service and Sunshine House, interviewed all relevant managers and examined case records and personnel records. They also met with Speakerbox members and found this so helpful that they added a further meeting with Speakerbox to their inspection schedule.
7. The Inspectors provided verbal feedback to senior managers on 14 December 2011 in which they stated their provisional judgment that Southwark's fostering service is "Good with many outstanding features". This was confirmed in the full

inspection report that the department received on 17 January 2012. The full report is to be found in Appendix 1.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

8. Southwark's Fostering Service is one of the largest in London. Southwark has around 180 fostering households currently providing placements at any one time to around 410 children and young people. The Fostering Service provides a vital service to a very diverse group of children and young people, including short break provision to children with disabilities (through the Family Link service).
9. The fostering service plays a key role in meeting the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities in respect of looked after children and young people. The overall mission, aims, objectives, philosophy of care, and the range of services available to meet the needs of children are set out in the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose was approved by the Corporate Parenting Committee in November 2011. An annual review of the Statement of Purpose is required under the Fostering Regulations and Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011. The Statement of Purpose will be refreshed, in consultation with Speakerbox, and the revised version will be presented to the committee for approval in October 2012.
10. Significant changes to the management and structure of the fostering service were implemented from April 2011. The Adoption and Fostering Service Manager retired in Autumn 2010. The Service was reorganised with the Fostering and Adoption Teams coming under the management of two Service Managers. A new Service Manager post was created with responsibility for Fostering, Children with Disabilities, CAMHS and Out of Hours. These changes have been effective in strengthening leadership and management of these key service areas.
11. In April 2011 the Department put in place new arrangements for commissioning assessments of new foster carers from specialist agencies. This change in approach is enabling the department to achieve much more ambitious targets in recruiting new foster carers in order to meet the "sufficiency planning" requirements as set out in the Fostering Regulations and The Children Act 2004. This is the statutory requirement upon the local authority to ensure the maintenance of a local pool of foster carers sufficient to meet the needs of the authority's looked after children.
12. In November 2011 Southwark's Fostering Service presented a performance report to the Corporate Parenting Committee. A further performance report will be presented to the committee in November 2012

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Summary of Ofsted inspection report**

13. Ofsted uses the following four descriptors when judging the quality of services

Outstanding	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

14. Ofsted gave the fostering service an **overall rating of Good**.
15. Ofsted also gave an individual rating to each of the six key areas inspected. The first five of these correspond to the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The fifth area ("Organisation") relates to the quality of management and the organisation's ability to ensure strategic planning and a robust and effective approach to constant improvement.

#### **Ofsted judgment and key points in relation to each area inspected**

<b>Area Inspected</b>	<b>Ofsted Judgment</b>	<b>Key points from inspection report</b>
<b>Helping Children to be healthy</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Excellent health care arrangements</li> <li>-Successful partnerships</li> <li>-Excellent Care Link (CAMHS) service</li> <li>-Exceptional foresight</li> <li>-Outstanding support to foster carers</li> </ul>
<b>Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Actively promotes children's safety and welfare</li> <li>-Children learn the importance of personal safety</li> <li>-Clear procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns</li> <li>-Fostering households are safe</li> </ul>
<b>Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Excellent range of support</li> <li>-Organisational ethos celebrates diversity</li> <li>-Children receive excellent educational support</li> <li>-Virtual school system is highly effective</li> <li>-Children receive substantial encouragement to achieve</li> </ul>

Area Inspected	Ofsted Judgment	Key points from inspection report
<b>Helping children make a positive contribution</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Children are enabled to be highly influential within the organization</li> <li>-Speakerbox make an outstanding contribution</li> <li>-Children's participation is fully integrated into service policy and planning</li> <li>-Children are always asked for their views and their views make a difference</li> <li>-The service works in partnership with parents</li> </ul>
<b>Achieving economic wellbeing</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Excellent support to ease transition into adulthood</li> <li>-Organisation invests heavily in young people's personal development</li> <li>-Innovative promotion of young people's economic well-being</li> <li>-Young people are well prepared for independence</li> </ul>
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Children are at the heart of the service</li> <li>-Clear Statement of Purpose</li> <li>-Strong, consistent, well-qualified and experienced management</li> <li>-Service builds on strengths and undertakes joint initiatives</li> <li>-Robust human resources support</li> <li>-Extremely effective fostering panel</li> <li>-Outstanding promotion of equality and diversity</li> <li>-Service is aware of strengths and areas for development</li> </ul>

### Action Plan arising from the inspection.

16. Ofsted has made three recommendations in the inspection report under the title, "What must be done to secure future improvement?". The following action plan is now in place to deal quickly with the three recommendations.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
(1)Ensure foster carers attain the necessary Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Training	Service Manager (Fostering) and Organisational Development Business Partner to agree an action plan and progress monitoring system	By end of March 2012
(2)Provide foster carers with clear information about allowances and expenses payable, and how to access them	Letter to be sent to all foster carers Foster Carers' Handbook to be amended to clarify allowances and expenses payable	By end of February 2012 By end of July 2012
(3)Update the Children's Guide to include the contact details for the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted	Children's Guide to be amended and reprinted with required changes	By end of April 2012

### Policy implications

17. Reports to the corporate parenting committee enable Southwark to be compliant with relevant regulations and procedures.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
The Fostering Service Statement of Purpose	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Chris Saunders, Head of Services for Children in Care 020 7525 1039

### APPENDICES

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	Ofsted - London Borough of Southwark Council Fostering Service Inspection Report for local authority fostering service Inspection date 14/12/2011



## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson Deputy Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
<b>Report Author</b>	Chris Saunders, Head of Services for Children in Care	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	7 February 2012	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	7 February 2012	

# London Borough of Southwark Council Fostering Service

Inspection report for local authority fostering agency

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC043495
<b>Inspection date</b>	14/12/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Sharon Lewis / Caroline Wilson
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Social Care Inspection

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<b>Setting address</b>	Southwark Council, Learning & Business Centre, Cator Street, LONDON, SE15 6AA
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<b>Telephone number</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	London Borough of Southwark
<b>Registered manager</b>	
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Paul McCarthy
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	04/12/2007

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality  
Good: this aspect of the provision is strong  
Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound  
Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

Southwark fostering service is part of the local authority services for looked after children and provides a service for a diverse range of children, within an inner London borough. The fostering service provides short and long-term placements, placements with family and friends and parent and child placements. The service additionally provides short breaks for disabled children living with their families. At the time of the inspection 411 children were placed within fostering households.

### Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The fostering service demonstrates a great passion for children. The service seeks to empower children giving them a voice and creatively responding to their diverse needs. Children benefit from a good service with outstanding features. The organisation exceeds in the outcomes of health, consulting with foster children, promoting children's achievements and assisting to prepare them for adulthood. There is a robust understanding of the issues children face and the service takes an innovative approach to facing these challenges. The implementation of equality and diversity is excellent.

The organisation has a good awareness of the new standards and regulations. The impressive action plan robustly addresses all areas for development. The service has a good capacity for improvement. Shortfalls do not directly impact on children. These relate to updating the children's guide, providing clear financial information and ensuring foster carers undertake the required vocational training.

### Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the service was asked to address six actions and eight recommendations. The service has successfully addressed all areas, which demonstrates their strong commitment to children. The majority of these actions and recommendations are no longer applicable under the new regulations and standards. Children's welfare is better promoted and safeguarded through the improvements in record keeping, health and safety, foster carer approvals, exemptions and panel procedures.

## Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from the organisation's excellent health care arrangements. An extensive range of initiatives innovatively cater for children's physical, emotional and psychological needs. The holistic range of interventions are effective and ensure children thrive. Children have comprehensive health plans, which clearly detail their specific needs. Plans fully highlight the respective responsibilities of foster carers and professionals. The service demonstrates substantial awareness of the issues facing children. This enables them to be purposefully responsive by strategically tailoring interventions. This contributes to placement stability.

The service actively works to secure the best health outcomes for children. It has successfully built partnerships with key agencies and professionals. There is an outstanding commitment to joint working. The organisation has a building devoted to children's health, which has a range of resources. The advantage is that children can access a range of health services from one site. This includes both occupational and speech and language therapy. Resources include an adventure play ground, a sensory room, soft play and a ball pond. This enables children to enjoy a fun and suitably stimulating environment.

A significant strength is the specialist, multi-disciplinary team dedicated to children's emotional and mental health. This is part of Child and Adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). Children receive tailored support, which can consist of a wide range of individual therapy. This includes psychotherapy, drama and play therapy. The specialist mental health team has a worker specifically employed to assist foster carers. Staff work with foster carers to develop behavioural strategies and coping mechanisms. The team excellently liaises with other CAMHS in a variety of boroughs. There is a diligent focus on providing the best service for children. If necessary the team will support children living outside of the borough.

The organisation has exceptional foresight and identifies particular health needs which may impact on future outcomes for the child. This results in creative service development. Examples are the recruitment of a worker to address teen pregnancies and an early screening tool focused on emotional health. The service undertakes innovative work with leaders in mental health service. This has contributed to national guidance.

They creatively engage children to take responsibility for their health and make positive choices. This includes targeted services which address sexual health and drug and alcohol misuse.

Foster carers receive outstanding support dedicated to promoting healthy outcomes. The wide range of services, training and practical guidance are dynamically responsive to presenting needs. Comprehensive induction and ongoing training, enables foster carers to actively address children's health needs. Individual bespoke training effectively equips them with the skills to manage a range of medical conditions. Children reside in safe, nurturing, healthy home environment. Foster

homes are maintained to a good standard. Children enjoy a balanced, culturally reflective diet and regular exercise. Children receive a leisure card, which enables them to access free swimming, gym sessions and classes to promote physical health.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The service actively promotes the safety and welfare of children. Efficient procedures ensure that foster carers and staff are aware of their role in safeguarding children. The service follows Government guidance and keeps foster carers informed of the changes in legislation. Effective safe caring principles and strategies protect children from abuse and other forms of significant harm. Risk management is proportionate, respectfully balancing the needs of the child and taking reasonable precautions. There is a good awareness of internet dangers. Foster carers receive relevant training and computers have the necessary safeguards. This helps to protect young people from cyber bullying and other forms of abuse.

Children learn the importance of personal safety, making choices and learning from experience. There is a strong awareness of peer pressure and challenges facing young people. This includes positively addressing gang activity, sexualised behaviour and substance misuse. The organisation endeavours to avoid criminalising young people, wherever possible. Strong links with the youth offending and other teams provides a good foundation for preventative work. Children benefit from their positive relationships with foster carers which generates a culture of openness and trust. Children state that they are 'listened to' and do not highlight any concerns regarding bullying or their safety. Children comment that they feel 'safe' and 'well cared for'.

There is a clear procedure for responding to, documenting and monitoring safeguarding concerns. A designated senior manager is responsible for managing allegations. The strong relationship between the quality assurance and unit and the fostering services ensures the prompt investigation of complaints and allegations. Systems monitor any recurring themes or patterns. This includes concerns that do not meet the local authority threshold criteria. Where allegations are made with regards to foster carers they are automatically taken to panel. Plans are in progress to further improve the quality of care. This includes relocating a child protection coordinator into the fostering service for one day a week.

The service ensures fostering households are safe. This includes annual unannounced visits, health and safety checks and robust recruitment and ongoing Criminal Record Bureau checks. Children receive the necessary protection from the organisation's missing from care policy. This complies with national and the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance. The well-established protocols promote good practice. This is supported by strong internal communication mechanisms. Foster carers can access 24-hour support to manage unauthorised absences. Where there are ongoing issues, these are competently addressed. There is a good relationship

with the police. A specialist team also effectively explores any sexual exploitation concerns.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children receive an excellent range of support to maximise their potential. Children provide extensive examples of how being in their fostering households has positively changed their lives. This includes attention to their personal hygiene, pursuing activities, enjoying school and having ambitions for their future. They enjoy the fact that they have friends and increased confidence and self belief. Children comment that they 'have a great life'. They state their lives has changed from 'bad to good'. Children are making significant progress, in relation to their starting points. Foster carer's focus on assisting children in accordance with the Every child Matters outcome areas. Children's social workers remark on the 'excellent progress'. They comment that children are 'supported well'.

The organisational ethos celebrates the diversity of their children, ensuring they feel valued. Children have a sense of belonging and acceptance. They learn to develop pride in themselves, their heritage and respective cultures. Examples are specific events to celebrate Black History Month, fashion shows and gender related activities. Children enjoy a wide range of new opportunities and experiences. This is regardless of their background or disability. Disabled children have a flourishing short break service. This enables them to have wider access to their local community, have fun and develop new relationships. Children enjoy a wide range of programmes, which greatly enhances their lives. An excellent innovative activity programme is available for teenagers. This focuses on enhancing their lives through empowerment and increasing their self-worth.

Children receive excellent educational support which is creatively responsive to a child's individual needs. There is a substantial commitment to extended school activities and the pupil premium scheme. Children comment that they are 'always being encouraged'. External verification highlights the dynamic attainment Southwark are achieving on a national scale. Children are exceeding expectations and have exceptional educational outcomes. The service has a systematic approach to the ongoing assessment of children's educational needs and responding to these proactively. Foster carers and staff maintain and sustain good links with the child's school. Children comment on the support they receive, with reading, homework, finding courses and reaching their goal.

The virtual school system demonstrates a dedication to corporate parenting. The service is continually evolving to secure the most effective intervention for children. Excellent liaison helps children to secure places in their preferred school. The team also provide valuable assistance to avert the need for suspensions or expulsions. Children benefit from innovative reading programmes, computers, individual tuition, mentoring and focused tracking of their progress and attendance. The service can also support children with getting to school though arranging transport. Foster carers



benefit from extensive support which helps them support young people with learning. This includes inspiring training and financial assistance with internet connections. Children receive scholarships for higher education. Children use this to their advantage and are attending colleges and university.

Children receive substantial encouragement to achieve, in all aspects of their lives. This includes nurturing their talents, interests and learning how to behave in a socially acceptable manner. This significantly raises their self esteem and resilience. The social and emotional skills they learn dynamically addresses their personal development. Children state, 'I am happy in care. I enjoy it here. If I never came into care I would not of gone to all these fun places'. Children list the range of activities they participate in, these include swimming, horse riding, ice-skating parties, going to church, social clubs and theme parks. The service also organises events which includes pantomime trips, picnics and achievement celebrations.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children have a highly influential role within the organisation and the fostering service. They significantly impact upon service development. There is an excellent children in care council, called Speakerbox. They are known to 'get things done' and are actively supported by the children's rights officer. The strong mutually respectful relationship with senior management empowers children. This enables them to have considerable impact on policy, practice, evaluation and change. They meet formally with senior management and the corporate parenting committee. This has recently been extended to include attending team meetings. This assists with maintaining an open dialogue with social workers.

Speakerbox make an outstanding contribution to other children, the organisation and wider afield. They regularly produce an impressive magazine which assists with raising children's awareness of their rights. This include undertaking research which helps to shape the service. An example being exit interviews for care leavers. They proactively influence decision making, a recent example being the semi-independence allowance.

Speakerbox are involved in staff interviews, speaking at conferences, events and training foster carers. Their accomplishments also include meeting with the Prime Minister. They receive training and support to undertake these responsibilities and find the experience greatly rewarding.

Children's participation in discussions and decision-making about their own futures is fully integrated into service policy and planning. This includes creative methods to enable participation of disabled and younger children. There are wide-ranging opportunities for children to meet up together. These enable children to have fun with their peers, share experiences and see their siblings. Children contribute to their own and foster carer reviews. They can also nominate their foster care for an 'Extra Mile' award. A child wrote the following to describe the winner of the recent award 'she is the type of mum I have been praying for all my life'.

Children are always asked for their views and these views make a difference. Children comment 'when I talk to them they listen'. 'When I have problems there are always people in the house to talk to'. Foster carers are positively involved in helping children make sense of their family relationships. Life story work additionally contributes to children developing a positive view. Children know how to complain and if they wish they can be supported by their peers. The service has established an effective complaints system. Children experience the system as quick and easy for them to use. The children's rights officer and children in care council can also take on an advocacy role.

The service works in partnership with parents especially in relation to short breaks. The service meets the needs of children as well as parents. Placements proceed at the families pace, ensuring the child is happy and having their needs met. Children benefit from highly personalised, flexible, contact arrangements. This enables them to maintain appropriate relationships with their family members and other important people in their lives. The new contact model positively responds to the increased demands and is centred around the child's needs. A pool of trained staff are matched directly to families. The new building has a purpose-built contact suite. The aim being to significantly improve the quality of contact for birth families.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Children receive excellent, wide-ranging tailored support to ease their transition into adulthood. This enables them to reach their potential and successfully meet their practical, financial, social and emotional needs.

Children under 18 do not have to leave care until they feel personally ready. 'Staying Put' arrangements enable them to remain living with their foster parents after the age of 18. This offers young people a high level of stability and valued support. Allowances, training and continued support provides foster carers with the confidence they need to prepare young people for independent living.

The organisation believes in their young people and invests heavily into their personal development. Children benefit from an outstanding adolescence and after care service where children can learn a vast range of life skills. There is an inspiring range of support which uniquely empowers young people. They have their own personal advisor and build on their self confidence through life coaching. Young people benefit from comprehensive group work and drop-in sessions.

The organisation innovatively promotes young people's economic well-being. Young people benefit from a dynamic employment, education and training strategy. This includes providing job opportunities through apprenticeships, careers advice, assistance with university and further education and helping them secure employment. The service thoughtfully considers all the practical hurdles facing young people. Young people receive financial assistance to purchase interview clothes and

travel to work. They also practice their interview skills. Young people feel that they are strongly encouraged and supported to achieve their dreams and ambitions.

Young people are well prepared for independence. In their foster homes they engage in age appropriate activities which promotes their independence. They learn a range of household skills, which include doing their own laundry, keeping their rooms clean, cooking and budgeting. The vast majority of care leavers are still in touch with the service. The organisation excels in their meticulous desire to consistently improve. There is a tracking system monitoring care leavers, they continue to be consulted and a young person was commissioned to evaluate a specific aspect of the service.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are at the heart of the service. There is an innovative approach to corporate parenting. The organisation demonstrates a strong grasp of the issues facing their children. They creatively work in a child centred manner to promote and enhance life chances. Approachable, senior management empower and value children, foster carers and staff. The organisation reflect and evaluates their practice. They constantly strive to improve and research contributes to effective service development. Foster carers highlight that the service is 'passionate about the kids'. Children highlight they would like to 'thank Southwark Fostering for giving me great care'. Stakeholders comment on the 'good communication' and describe the service as 'imaginative and action orientated.'

The clear Statement of Purpose highlights the overall mission, aims, objectives, philosophy of care, and the range of services available to meet the needs of children. The service is competently conducted in a manner consistent with the Statement of Purpose. Children benefit from their own guide. This is available in age appropriate formats. This document is currently being updated to include the contact details for Ofsted and the Children's Rights Director. Foster carers have concise guidance within their specialist handbook. Foster carers report that 'the help and support I get is 100%', they describe Southwark as 'the best'. All highlight the exceptional support they receive from their supervising social worker. Additional support includes varied support groups, respite care, mentoring, social outings and celebratory events.

There is strong, consistent, well-qualified and experienced management. One of the key strengths of the organisation is their good leadership and their ability to retain high quality staff and foster carers. The service successfully demonstrates efficient financial management. Effective commissioning and strategic restructuring enables the fostering team to deliver their service in a more creative manner. This includes introducing a duty information officer post and outsourcing their fostering assessments.

The service resiliently builds on their strengths and undertake joint initiatives where tangible. Robust quality monitoring and performance management systems identify

areas for improvement. There is a culture of reflection and evaluation, which is driven by improving outcomes for children. A good benchmark is the audit of the service's compliance with the new national minimum standards. The annual safeguarding plan is a further example of effective quality assurance.

Robust human resources support all aspects of staffing, including recruitment and selection. There is a positive commitment to continuous development, which includes staff, foster carers and panel members. Foster carers and staff benefit from regular structured supervision for staff and foster carers. Staff and foster carers receive appropriate resources, training and support. Foster carers and staff keep up to date with key policy and practice developments. This assists them with fulfilling their respective roles in providing a high quality service to children. Children's Workforce Development Council training is in progress. The service acknowledge they require greater success in this area. The service is introducing mentors and other options to ensure all foster carers achieve their vocational qualification.

Children benefit from a dynamically sharp, extremely effective fostering panel. The panel efficiently discharges its functions and demonstrates robust quality assurance. There is a strong emphasis on safeguarding and achieving permanence for children. Panel membership is diversely representative of the local community. The agency decision maker considers all recommendations in a timely manner. Children enjoy significant levels of stability within successfully matched and well-supported placements. Staff and foster carers demonstrate great enthusiasm and commitment to their roles. Staff and foster carers confirm job satisfaction and confidence in management. Children benefit from good family and friend fostering arrangements. Family and friends receive valued support, which enables them to effectively meet the needs of children. An example is priority housing if they remain within the borough.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. There is a holistic approach to meeting needs. Working practices throughout the service, policies and procedures proactively promotes the diversity of children. This is consistent with the organisation's equality policies. Themed audits feed into the comprehensive equality impact assessment. This ensures children receive an equitable service and there is focused analysis of outcomes. The service takes steps to ensure there is a diverse range of staff and carers who can meet the diverse needs of the children. Care planning actively considers children's gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality. The service inventively addresses challenges. Examples are working in partnership with specific communities to raise awareness of safeguarding.

The service is actively aware of their strengths and areas for development. Shortfalls identified do not impact on the quality of care or outcomes for children and young people. There is a good computerised system, which ensures the prompt payment of foster carers. The guidance on discretionary allowances and expenses payable, however, are not widely available. This means that some placements may not have access to all the resources available to them. The move to the new purpose-designed single site in January 2012, provides a single base for practitioners. The aim being to

further improve integrated working. The current premises and administrative arrangements meet the service's needs. There is a good integrated information technology system. Children's records provide a meaningful summary of their lives. They concisely contain all relevant information required by regulations.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Recommendations**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure foster carers attain the necessary Children's Workforce Development Council Training (NMS 20.2)
- provide foster carers with clear information about the allowances and expenses payable, and how to access them (NMS 28.6)
- update the Children's Guide to include the contact details for the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted. (NMS 16.4)

<b>Item No:</b> 9.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 21 February 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2010-11	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee notes the Independent Reviewing Officer Annual report (Appendix A).
2. That an action plan be drawn up for implementation of the key priorities noted in section 11.2 of this report.

## KEY MESSAGES

3. IRO performance in relation to reviews held to time has much improved in this year.
4. The Care Planning regulations introduced in April 2011 have lead to a number of new procedures and duties for IRO's
5. Most of the concerns that IRO have are dealt with by informal contact with social workers, but there is now a simplified system for formal escalation to senior manager where appropriate
6. We continue to work closely with young people, social workers and foster carers to ensure that the IRO service is effective and responsive

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

7. An Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service for Looked After Children is required in guidance arising from The Adoption and Children Act 2002. The report contains a summary of work completed by Southwark IRO Service for the period 2010-2011

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. Appendix A sets out the report of the Independent Reviewing Officer and key messages arising out of this report are set out in paragraphs 3- 6 of this report.

## Community impact statement

9. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities.
10. The work of the IROs is intended to improve the outcome for looked after children.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
IRO Handbook	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Jackie Cook 020 7525 0387

**APPENDICES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix A	Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report

**AUDIT TRAIL**

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
<b>Report Author</b>	Jackie Cook, Head of Social Work Improvement and Quality Assurance	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	7 February 2012	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		7 February 2012

**London Borough of Southwark  
Independent Reviewing Officers  
Annual Report  
2010 - 2011**

Report by: Jackie Cook

Head of Social Work Improvement and Quality assurance

30/11/11



## 1. Introduction

An Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service for Looked After Children is required in accordance with guidance arising from The Adoption and Children Act 2002. The report has to be presented to the Director of Children's Services, the Lead member for Children and the Corporate Parenting Panel.

This report contains a summary of work completed by Southwark IRO Service for the period 1 April 2010 – 3 March 2011.

## 2. Legal Context

- 2.1 Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced the statutory role of the IRO, with a duty to monitor the Local authority's functions by means of regular statutory reviews of the Care Plan of looked after children. The IRO was given the power to refer a case to the Children's and Families Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) if any dispute could not be resolved within the Local Authority.
- 2.2 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 expanded the role of the IRO from just reviewing the child's Care Plan to monitoring the child's case on an ongoing basis.
- 2.3 New regulations (Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations) were issued in 2010 and these are accompanied by 4 sets of statutory guidance including the 'IRO Handbook', which came into force in April 2011. All children in care including those on Adoption Plans or receiving short breaks are now covered by these regulations.
- 2.4 A number of new procedures have been drafted as a result of the new guidance. These include primarily the new arrangements for 'Staying put' and the 'Family and friends placement guidance'.
- 2.5 Every looked after child has a named IRO who has independent oversight of the child's case including:
  - Determining and representing the child's wishes and feelings
  - Ensuring their rights and interests are protected
  - Assessing whether the Local Authorities Care Plan for the child meets the assessed needs of the child within the timescale of the child
  - Negotiating with the social work team and managers on any identified issues arising from the Care Plan or implementation of the Care Plan and where necessary escalating unresolved concerns to an appropriate level in the Local Authority's management structure, and /or if necessary to CAFCASS.
- 2.6 The main forum through which the IRO carries out their monitoring role is the Statutory Looked After Review. These take place regularly at the following times
  - First review within 28 days of the child becoming looked after
  - Second review within 90 days
  - Subsequent reviews at 180 day intervals
  - When a child or IRO asks for one
  - When significant events occur

- 2.7 The review should, wherever possible, take place at the child's placement. Parents, residential workers, foster carers and their support workers, social worker and the IRO are the expected attendees. Reports from other professionals such as Health, Education and CAMHS are also received. In some cases, it may be necessary to hold a series of meetings to facilitate all professionals and views to be heard – for example where a child does not want their parents or another professional to attend a review.
- 2.8 The role of the IRO was reviewed by the Family Justice Review which reported in November 2011. Their conclusions in connection with IROs were as follows:
- The role of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is important to local authorities and they would very likely recreate it were it removed from them. The priority should be to improve the quality of the function and ensure its effectiveness and visibility.
  - We recommend that local authorities should review the operation of their IRO service to ensure that it is effective. In particular they should ensure that they are adhering to guidance regarding case loads.
  - We recommend that the Directors of Children's Services / Directors for Social Services and Lead Member for Children receive regular reports from the IRO on the work undertaken and its outcomes. Local Safeguarding Children Boards should also consider such reports.
  - Courts would benefit from this information too alongside outcomes of care cases. The pilot recommended earlier (for courts to receive information about the outcomes for children and families on which they have adjudicated) should include information from the IRO.
  - The courts and IROs need to develop more effective links. Guardians and IROs should strengthen their working relationship.

### **3. The Southwark Context**

- 3.1 In mid 2009, Southwark was estimated to have a population of 285,600. There is a high proportion of young people, with 61,400 children and young people aged between 0–19 years (21.5%). There are around 24,200 children under 5 years (8.5 %). This is higher than the National proportion of under 5's (6.1 per cent).
- 3.2 Southwark is an extremely diverse borough with over 181 languages spoken in its schools (January 2008). The largest ethnic minority group is black African (mainly Nigerian and West African) which accounts for around 15.6% of the whole population. In 2010 it was estimated that 64.8% of the population was white.
- 3.3 Southwark has relatively high numbers of looked after children compared to other London boroughs. On 5/12/11 there were 555 Children looked After in Southwark compared to 557 at end of March 2010.
- 3.4 The make up of Southwark Looked After children population was as follows on 5/12/11

CLA by Age & Gender	Female	Male	Total
0-4	52	65	117
5-9	43	50	93
10-14	55	79	134
15-18	83	128	211
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>555</b>

Ethnicity breakdown was as follows:

CLA by Gender & Ethnicity	Female	Male	Total	%
Asian - Bangladeshi	3	1	4	1%
Asian - Other	3	16	19	3%
Asian - Pakistani	1	2	3	0.1%
<b>Total Asian</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
Black African	53	61	114	20.5%
Black Caribbean	35	42	77	13.9%
Black Other	22	25	47	8%
<b>Total Black</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>42.4%</b>
Chinese	1		1	0.1%
Information not yet obtained	2	6	8	1.4%
Other	3	15	18	3.2%
Chinese and other	6	21	27	4.7%
Other Mixed	13	24	37	7%
White & Asian		1	1	0.1%
White & Black African	7	5	12	2.2%
White & Black Caribbean	19	22	41	7.4%
<b>Total dual heritage</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
White British	57	86	143	25.8%
White Irish	2	2	4	1%
White - Other	11	14	25	4.5%
<b>Total white</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>31.3%</b>
Not stated	1		1	0.1%

CLA by Gender & Ethnicity	Female	Male	Total	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>100</b>

Southwark has an over-representation of black and dual heritage children in care. On 5/12/11 only 31.3% of the care population were described as white. This reflects a similar position to most other London boroughs. The largest single ethnic group is 'White British' at 143 children (25.8%) and the second highest group is 'Black African' at 114 children (20.5%).

### 3.5 Key Challenges for Southwark Looked after Children Services

The key challenges for Southwark Looked after Children Services reflect many of the challenges faced by other Local Authorities and inner city areas.

- The current financial situation means that there is reduced funding for local authorities. This has an impact of staffing and resources available for placements.
- Meeting the needs of a diverse population of looked after children in terms of race, culture, religion, language and special needs is an ongoing challenge for services.
- The need to identify sufficient placements appropriate to the diverse needs of children and young people in a competitive market place and within the context of a decreasing budget.
- Research stresses the benefit of continuing to offer foster care and support post 18 for many looked after children to improve their outcomes in adult life. This is the case for example where young people continue in education post 18. In addition some looked after children are vulnerable young people who do not quite meet criteria for adult mental health or disability services and struggle with independence. The new 'staying put' procedures outline how Southwark will meet these requirements.

## 4. Southwark IRO Service

4.1 The Southwark IRO Service is situated within the Social Work Improvement and Quality Assurance business unit. The Business Unit Manager reports directly to the Deputy Director making IROs independent of the operational children's services management structure where allocation of resources lies. The team is based at Tooley Street.

4.2 In addition to the core function of monitoring childrens' care plans, the IRO Service is also involved in:

- Meetings on individual cases
- Wider consultations
- Planning forums where policy and procedures are developed e.g. Health, Education, Participation and Professional Standards groups,
- Audit work in conjunction with other departments,
- Training and liaison with teams
- Assisting with Complaints
- Working with the commissioning team to monitor the quality of placements.

#### 4.3 During the year IROs have:

- 
- Assisted with development of several policies and procedures. In particular there has been IRO input to the new Staying put policy – contained within the ‘Succeeding into adulthood’ document and the Family and Friends protocol.
- Contributed to the development of revised consultation documents for young people and foster carers.
- Provided induction training for new social workers around planning for looked after children.
- Provided inter-agency training around working with parents who have mental health problems
- IROs have attended LAC service Health, Education, Participation and Adoption/Permanency groups .

4.4 IROs highlight good practice by workers as well as feeding back evidence of poor practice, concerns about placements or safeguarding issues.

4.5 The IRO service establishment consists of 8 full time equivalent IROs. The permanent staff are line managed by the QA service manager. The sessional IRO’s have long-arm supervision via telephone contact with the QA managers and regular group meetings. Administrative support is provided by two full time administrative staff managed by the QAU Admin Manager.

4.6 Staffing in 2010-2011 consisted of :

- 4 directly employed permanent staff making up 3 f.t.e. posts
- 14 freelance self employed sessional workers funded by 5 full time equivalent posts. These have varying caseloads between 14-76 children looked after.
- Of the 18 workers 2 are male, 16 female; 2 are black and 16 are white.

4.7 The team make up is the same as for 2009-2010 indicating good retention of staff but, more importantly, consistency for children. 11 of our IROs have been working for Southwark for between 3 - 9 years.

## 5. Performance

5.1 The IRO team provides an efficient service, within budget. During 2010 - 2011 the team chaired and completed reports for 1521 reviews of children looked after as well as making representations, participating in staff induction and training, undertaking audits and undertaking a range of other tasks.

5.2 Given the budget for the service this represents a unit cost of approximately £360 per review including professional and administrative costs.

5.3 The review reports, once signed off by the Team Manager, are the child’s Care Plan.

5.4 The IRO service makes an important contribution to good performance against key performance indicators in the National Indicator Set: C63 (Participation at Reviews) and N166 (timeliness of Reviews). They also contribute to other Performance Indicators through quality assurance and collection of data or raising issues on cases at appropriate levels to minimise poor outcome e.g. drift in care planning, placement stability, educational achievements, health appointments etc.

### 5.5 Performance data 2007-2010

Year	2007-2008	2009-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Number of LAC Reviews	1579	1599	1571	1521
NI66 Reviews in timescales	95.7%	94.1%	92.8%	95.7%
C63 Participation at Reviews	94.7%	95.7%	94%	90.2%
No of LAC at March 31st	576	533	557	522

5.6 The performance in relation to reviews not held within timescales in 2010-11 is much improved on the previous year, with only 4.3% of 'fails' as opposed to 7.2% the year before. Of the 491 children who had been looked after for at least 4 weeks, 21 children did not have all of their reviews within the time-scale. Of those 4.3% the reviews were, in most cases, held within a few days of the deadline date.

5.7 Of the 21 reviews that were late, 12 were due to late referral to the IRO service or late entry onto the ICS system; the remaining 9 were due to minor miscalculations by the IRO in setting the dates.

### 5.8 Participation

The Performance Indicator for child participation is based on number of children who have not contributed to any one of their reviews in a year. So although a child may participate in 2 out of 3 reviews in a year this would not fulfil the criteria for participation.

In total, 9.8% of looked after children over 4 years did not contribute to one of their reviews held during 2010-11. This represents 54 review meetings for 51 children or young people.

Participation Code	Number
PN7 No attendance –views not expressed (Young person's choice)	20
PN7 No attendance –views not expressed (Not available)	20
PN7 No attendance –views not expressed (Not facilitated)	14
Total	54

The table above is a breakdown of the 54 meetings where children or young people did not contribute to one of their review meetings in the year. Of these 3 children did not contribute on two occasions. There were 20 young people who actively chose not to participate. Of the remainder – 20 young people were not available on the day of the review – this might have been due to another appointment or educational commitment

or because the young person was missing from care. Where the attendance of the young person was not facilitated – this might be because the young person was not invited to the meeting or it was felt that the young person should not attend the review for some reason.

In all reviews where a young person does not contribute to the review the IRO will try to agree a plan with the social worker or carer to ensure the young person's views are available for the next review if they are not attending.

- 5.8 IROs will always aim to spend time individually with children and young people prior to a review to determine their wishes and feelings, identify if they have any concerns and find out how they would like to participate in the meeting. If necessary or requested the IRO will ensure an advocate is provided to support the child or young person.
- 5.9 IROs will usually arrange to meet children and young people at different times, or speak to them on the phone to try and gain their views when they have not attended a review meeting. Children or young people who have English as a second language will have an interpreter available. Children with disabilities or with communication difficulties will be supported to express their views with help of their carers or a specialist worker or an advocate.
- 5.10 Distribution of review records

Distribution of reviews is not currently a Performance Indicator. However statutory guidance now indicates that decisions should be circulated within 5 working days/7 days and the full report within 15 working days /21 days.

## **6. Representations and Escalations**

- 6.1 IROs seek to ensure good outcomes for children. They do this through their quality assurance role in LAC reviews e.g. by checking diets are healthy and culturally appropriate, medicals take place, foster carers attend parents evenings or read bedtime stories, check contacts with siblings take place.
- 6.2 IROs pick up often on matters which make a difference to a child if they get overlooked for example ensuring sleepovers or school trips take place; passports are obtained so holidays are not missed; ensuring cultural and faith needs are met such as a prayer mat for young people of the Muslim faith. They will normally do this through suggestions at reviews and encouraging carers and workers rather than via formal escalation processes and so this cannot always be visibly evident or easily quantified.
- 6.3 Where there are concerns relating to implementation of the Care Plan, resources or poor practice, IROs will initially liaise with the team and seek to resolve things informally – often by bringing reviews forward or participating in professionals meetings. A record of this should be on the child's record. In the past this was often done via email or discussion with team and so was not previously very visible on the file. However an ICS record format for IROs has now been introduced which has assisted in tracking IRO interventions.
- 6.4 When a concern cannot be resolved informally each Local Authority must now have a formal 'dispute resolution' process through which an IRO can escalate their concern to the appropriate management level.
- 6.5 A simplified procedure for escalation of concerns entitled 'IRO Representation' was introduced in April 2011 with the introduction of the IRO Handbook. The representation form was put onto the Carefirst system as a 'careassess' form in September 2011. IROs will be liaising with Teams to ensure there is a common understanding of the process and its purpose.

- 6.6 During 2010-11 IROs escalated 13 cases aside from the many others where they liaised informally with social workers. Of these escalations, 9 were passed to team managers and 4 to service managers.
- 6.7 Five of the escalations were due to concern about drift or excessive delay in permanency planning for children. Another 6 were primarily in connection with children aged 16 or over – either in connection with the plans for them to move on or because of concerns about their welfare for example in one case the young person was going missing regularly.

In all cases, following the escalation, the managers concerned worked closely with the IROs to take action to remedy the concerns noted.

## 7. Involvement and Feedback from Stakeholders

- 7.1 Speaker Box, the Children in Care Council, have revised the Review consultation form for young people with a lead IRO to make it more child friendly. The new consultation form also includes a section for young people to feed back what they think of reviews. These comments will be collated for a future report.
- 7.2 Speaker Box have recently asked several young people what they think of IROs and the following quotes were received:
- ‘He goes the extra mile to help me. He is always listening. At the review he goes through everything. He’s the best!’
  - ‘I wanted more space for myself. I told my foster carer but she didn’t listen. I told my IRO and she did it well. She asked questions in the review.’
  - ‘She listens to me. She sorted out my contact with my dad.’
- 7.3 During 2010 an analysis of feedback from foster carers was carried out from data recorded in consultation forms. From 52 consultation forms received between July 2010 – March 2011:

Number	Rating – where 0 is very poor and 5 is very good
3	3
13	4
23	5
13	No rating given

A number of comments were made by carers in the forms:

- Foster carers can be nervous regarding reviews
- The social worker and IRO always take (the child’s) feelings into account, she is main priority
- Reviews are relaxed and very well done putting (the child) at ease which is not easy
- The social worker and IRO make (the child) feel relaxed and comfortable



- Having to chase minutes after reviews. Chair/IROs not acknowledging comments made on consultation forms, by previous IROs.

## **8. Audits**

8.1 A number of audits carried out in 2009-10 highlighted that IROs need to focus on risk issues to young people in reviews. The key risk areas are:

- where a child or young person is having unsupervised contact with family members
- where the child or young person is being rehabilitated to a family member
- where the child or young person is behaving in a way that may place them at risk – in particular criminal or gang-related behaviour.

This has been discussed in IRO meetings and the review record has now been amended to include a consideration of risk issues as part of the review process.

8.2 The revised working together in 2010 recommended that the LAC review and the Child protection conference processes should be integrated. A new procedure was drawn up in 2010 for children subject to dual processes – which has ensured more integrated practice. Current practice is that where there is a dual process either the same chair will chair both meetings or, failing that the IRO will attend the Child protection conference.

8.3 As a result of the audit findings, the CLA review ICS form has now been amended to include a separate consideration of risk issues. It is hoped that this will assist IROs to integrate these issues in more detail at future meetings.

8.4 IROs have directly participated during 2010-11 in a number of audits undertaken by the CLA service. These include an audit of pre-birth risk assessments in December 2010, an audit of teenage pregnancy in January 2011 and an audit of Foster care reviews in December 2010.

## **9. Education of Children Looked After**

9.1 The educational attainment of Looked after children is priority for the IRO service. Many of the informal and formal representations from IROs concern the provision of appropriate education to looked after children.

9.2 As part of the Looked after review the IRO will always review the personal education plan for the child or young person.

9.3 Almost all secondary provision within Southwark is now in the form of Academy schools. This is causing the IRO group some concern as Academies have no obligation to provide priority places for looked after children. This, coupled with a current shortage of school places in years 10 & 11 is having some impact on the provision of mainstream education both within Southwark and in other areas for looked after children and may mean that more looked after children may be educated in Pupil referral units or at home.

## **10. Safety of Children Looked After**

10.1 Following a gang-related incident in 2010 the issues arising were discussed in the Southwark safeguarding children board. In addition, an internal management review is underway and will be reporting in January 2012. The case was discussed in an IRO

meeting and the group agreed that Looked after reviews should always ensure that there is information from the Youth Offending service in reviews where appropriate.

- 10.2 Following the discussion IROs reviewed their case loads and where there were children who in their view were at risk because of criminal activity this was flagged up for managers.
- 10.3 IROs are always informed where looked after children are missing and are invited to attend missing from care meetings.
- 10.4 Two of the formal escalations made this year were in connection with older young people who were at risk – one because of gang-related activity and the other from going missing.

## **11. Key Successes in 2010 and Future Priorities**

### **11.1 Key successes in 2010-11 have been**

- Maintaining an experienced, committed and trained team of IROs providing consistency for children and young people.
- Improving the number of reviews held within time-scale
- The standard of Review reports remains high. Review reports provide a pen picture of the child, synopsis of family history and a good 6 monthly summary of the case, including assessed needs and action plan.
- The IRO service receives positive feedback from partner agencies such as Health, Education and CAMHS . Partners state that they value having an independent professional to liaise with, giving their views weight and integrating them into Care Plans.
- Advocates and the complaints section often find IROs can help negotiate resolution in a quicker and smoother manner.
- Introduction of a feedback form for IROs to give feedback to teams, commissioning and fostering service when placements are not of a satisfactory standard.
- Working with operational services to reduce delay in permanency planning and achieve better outcomes for Southwark Children Looked After. IROs will highlight concerns identified at reviews and seek resolution mostly through informal negotiation but also using the formal escalation process when necessary.
- IROs bring issues to the attention of management – for example drift or serious concerns where workers are ill or where there is poor practice.

### **11.2 Key Priorities for the IRO Service for 2011-12 are**

- Ensuring IROs and operational teams are fully up to date with the requirements of the new Regulations and guidance which were implemented in April 2011. Much is already good practice in Southwark. However extending the role to monitoring a child's Care Plan in between reviews is a challenge within existing resources.
- Improving the proportion of reviews held to time.
- Ensuring that all children and young people participate in a meaningful way in their LAC reviews or are spoken to separately by the IRO.
- Improving timeliness of completion and distribution of reports as timescales for distribution of review decisions are decreased in the new guidance.
- To ensure that IROs always take account of risk factors in chairing reviews – both in terms of younger children who may be at risk from placement move or rehabilitation or from older young people at risk from crime or gang-related activity or from going missing.

- Improving IROs access to court documents in proceedings through a more formal liaison with Legal Section. A specific protocol to be drafted in 2012.
- Improving the effectiveness of IRO representations to management in order to resolve issues of concerns ensuring transparency of work undertaken through IRO records on ICS. The new Carefirst report format will enable more accurate reporting of this.
- Improving the rate of progress of Permanency plans for Adoption or Special Guardianships and Long Term Fostering to ensure our children are in their permanent family at as early an age as possible through closer working with operational teams and Adoption and Fostering .
- Working with the Speaker Box council to obtain more information from children and young people as to how the review process and IRO role can be more useful for them

## **12. Summary**

The IRO Service has continued to provide an efficient and effective provision for reviewing and monitoring the Care Plans for Looked After Children. It contributes to improved outcomes for Looked After Children through increasing participation of children and young people in the decision making about their care as well as making independent representations to Operational Teams and Management on planning and practice issues. Communication and relationships with teams are for the most part positive with the independent scrutiny valued by social workers and management.

<b>Item No.</b> 10.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 21 February 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) - Carelink	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee notes the report on Carelink and the valuable role it plays in maintaining stable placements for children and young people in care.
2. To note the service has been protected and its brief expanded by extending its upper age limit from 16 – 18 years.

## KEY MESSAGES

3. Established in 1999, "Carelink" is Southwark's dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health team (CAMHS) who offer assessment and treatment to children and young people in the care of Southwark Social Care and their foster carers. Carelink is a multi-disciplinary team that is co located in the adoption and fostering team. Over the past year we have continued to offer a comprehensive CAMH service to Southwark looked after children.
4. Children and young people in care are referred with a wide variety of problems-emotional disorders, low mood, depression, self harm, suicidal ideation, PTSD, eating problems, anxiety, attachment disorder and difficulties, behavioural and conduct problems and neuro developmental disorders.
5. In 76-80% of the children and young people in treatment to the Carelink team have 4 or more confirmed Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), Felitti e al 1998. In the general population the figure is 4.6% with 4 or more ACE. Research has shown that this level of trauma, if not mediated by appropriate treatment correlates with a heightened risk of serious physical and mental ill health in later life.
6. This report was requested by Corporate Parenting Committee due to concerns that recent cutbacks in Southwark may have had a significant impact upon Carelink and its services to looked after children.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. In addition to direct work with children, young people and their carers we offer advice/consultation to the professional network and especially the social work team on care planning, therapeutic needs, placements and transitions. At any one time we will work with 140 looked after children and their foster families. In most cases this means seeing the child and foster carers on a weekly basis.
8. We have close links with the adoption team and more usually the referrals from that team are with children who are in transition from foster care to adoption. Or

we are referred adopted children and young people for a CAMHS assessment and possible therapeutic interventions who are experiencing extreme difficulties. Examples are adolescents undergoing developmental crisis that place pressure on the parents and increase likelihood of family breakdown. These young people are often not known to Southwark Social Care as the adoption may not have taken place in Southwark but the family now reside in the Borough, or the child and family were known in the past but have not had contact with the service for many years.

9. We work with Southwark looked after children both in and out of Borough. At any one time up to 50% of our open cases can be on children who are looked after by Southwark but live outside of the Borough. Where possible we like to work with Southwark children irrespective of address so we can offer continuity of service should there be a change of placement and better collaboration with the network given our close links with the CLA social workers. Where children and young people live too far to travel to Southwark for appointments we will broker referral to other CAMHS teams as necessary.
10. We are engaged in a wide range of teaching and training. This includes regularly running "Fostering Changes" training. This is primarily for foster carers and occasional adopters attend. The 'Fostering Changes' training offers specific strategies for parents coping with children and young people at different developmental levels. Indeed this training is the result of close collaboration between CAMHS and Southwark Social Care. This has been developed into a training manual and is published by BAAF. This has been further expanded and rolled out at a national level with a second addition recently published.
11. Following this and in conjunction with Carelink, Social Care and BAAF, another training programme called "Fostering Education" was developed. This is a specific training aimed at helping foster carers support children's learning in particular reading. "Fostering Education" has been evaluated and shown to be highly effective- this is evidenced by the average increase in children's reading age as assessed by standardised measures.
12. Additional practice books now also published by BAAF includes 'Managing Difficult Behaviours' a handbook for foster carers and 'Supporting Children's Learning'
13. Alongside the group work Carelink offer individual foster care support to Southwark carers. We also offer this to IFA carers in circumstances where IFA do not have an equivalent specialist service.
14. We regularly present to the prospective adopters preparation group on areas such as attachment and emotional development. We routinely have requests for information on the child's emotional needs from the fostering and adoption panels. This facilitates better identification of need and care planning.
15. We offer a 'drop-in' service to the CLA teams so they can quickly access advice on a particular child and easily make a referral to our service or signpost to another service as necessary.

### **Screening to identify any emotional or mental health difficulty**

16. Children and young people who become looked after by local authorities are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society (Sempik, Ward & Darker, 2008). They are at increased risk of poor outcome in terms of both child and adult mental health, educational attainment, employment and criminality (Ford, Vostanis, Meltzer & Goodman, 2007a; Viner & Taylor, 2005). By definition children in the care of social services have often already experienced traumatic events in their lives, so it is unsurprising that they are more likely to develop mental health problems than those in stable family environments.
17. The mental health needs of children in care are not routinely assessed with many children only receiving help when more intensive treatment is needed if their needs are recognised at all (Whyte & Campbell, 2008). In Southwark we agreed there was a need for systematic screening to promote early identification and intervention.
18. Given this gap in service provision and identification of difficulties for looked after children we developed mental health screening for 4-16 year old and 0-5's.

### **Screening 4-16 year olds**

19. In 2008 the Carelink team with Southwark Social Care successfully bid for a grant from Guy's and St Thomas' Charity to run a mental health screening programme for all young people aged 4-16 years remaining in the care of the social services department for four consecutive months over a period of 12 months.
20. The strategy has the following components:

We used the SDQ's (Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire) and Development and Well Being Assessment (DAWBA).

- The SDQ is a brief well validated and commonly used measure of psychopathology in 4-16 year olds (Goodman, 2001). The measures are currently not validated on children below the age of 4 years.
- A computer algorithm combined information on symptoms and impact from all informants to give a prediction of the likelihood of psychiatric disorder as 'probable', 'possible' and 'unlikely' (Goodman, Ford, Simmons, Gatward & Meltzer, 2001).
- The measures were completed by children aged 11 and over, their foster carers and the schools.
- We had support from supervising social workers, social workers and foster carers to ensure completion of the questionnaires.
- Foster carers and social workers caring for children with an 'unlikely' prediction were informed that it was unlikely that the child had significant psychopathology at this time. However it was stressed if they disagreed they could contact the Carelink team to be seen by a clinician and discuss their concerns.

- All informants for children with a 'probable' and 'possible' diagnosis were invited to complete a structured online psychiatric assessment, the DAWBA.
  - In addition all children with a 'probable' and 'possible' diagnosis were offered a CAMHS service.
21. Most children were seen by the Carelink team. For children living outside of the Borough unable to travel to our service we were able to successfully engage services local to the children and carers to offer a CAMHS service.
  22. On completion of this research in 2009 and in accordance with Government indicator the Department agreed to continue to support the screening of children in care. The Government only requires that the foster carers complete an SDQ and does not state what the Department has to do with this information.
  23. For the SDQ to be interpreted reliably there needs to be two informants (three if the child is 11+).
  24. In order to make the information clinically useful in Southwark we have agreed the following;
    - On a given date once a year all foster carers are asked to complete an SDQ for all Southwark children in their care. To date the return rate has been 100%.
    - The SDQ is returned centrally and forwarded to the Carelink team where they are reviewed.
    - When the SDQ is reviewed if there are concerns we complete the rest of the screening and where indicated ensure that a clinical service is offered to all children and young people with identified mental health need.
  25. In the two years we have been doing this screening all children and young people who have been identified as having a mental health need are already been seen or are on referral to a CAMHS service, usually the Carelink team.
  26. We think that this is due to the fact that Southwark social workers and foster carers are correctly identifying mental health needs in children in their care and ensuring referral to the appropriate services.
  27. The Department will continue to ensure foster carers complete the SDQ's annually and the Carelink team will clinically review to ensure early identification of need and accessibility of service to children in care to Southwark.

**Emotional and social development screening and intervention for looked after children 0-5 Years.**

28. The publication of the NICE Guidance for looked after children states we need to 'ensure all babies and young children are assessed by specialists child mental health worker to ensure the child does not exhibit signs of emotional distress (for example children or babies who may exhibit passive withdrawn or over compliant behaviour)'. It also asks that services 'offer early and preventive interventions for

babies and young children to avoid placement breakdown and reduce the impact on a child's potential to develop meaningful relationships in the longer term'. In order to target this vulnerable group who are not routinely seen in CAMHS teams we developed a screening protocol and successfully bid for a research grant from the Guy's and St Thomas Charity.

29. The purpose of our study was
- to understand more about the emotional/social development and mental health needs of young children who are looked after by social services.
  - to provide intervention for the child's carer and advice to the professional network where a need is identified
  - .
  - to improve collaboration and joint working across agencies.
30. Results from the project showed that 67% of under 5s had significant social/emotional needs that required follow up intervention from CAMHS. The project picked up a high level of previously undetected need and was able to offer a follow up intervention to help the child and their foster carer/kinship carer. Children with ongoing CAMH needs were also signposted to Carelink or other community resources and referrals of under fives have increased by three fold in this 12 month period. Social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers found the screening report and subsequent discussions/consultation very useful in decision making and care planning.
31. The Carelink team are continuing to use the ASQ-SE screening tool, along with clinical assessment, with under 5s being referred to the service, which has proved to be useful to SWs, IROs, and the Fostering/Adoption teams in identifying the needs of these young children and contributing to their care planning. We are submitting another research funding bid this year for a longitudinal study running across three or more boroughs with LAC. This has been highlighted as an area of good practice at a meeting with Tim Loughton, Children's Minister where we presented the project. We are very pleased with the support of the LA and Child Health in furthering this piece of work, as a collaborative project.

### **Current context**

32. In the recent financial reductions we have not lost any specific posts however we have extended our brief significantly and now accept referrals for young people up to the age of 18 years. In addition in the service reconfiguration Carelink have joined the Targeted service in Southwark CAMHS and this gives more scope to work with children on the edge of care. This has advantages as it offers the child a more seamless service in that they may not have to change teams on being accommodated by the department.
33. We also can co work with other members of the multi disciplinary team in Targeted CAMHS. However this does also mean an increase of the demand for the Carelink service. We will need to closely monitor work load and referrals so we can ensure continuing quality of the service and that looked after children are not being disadvantaged as they are in many mainstream services.



34. Since November, when we formally increased the age range for referrals, the team have started making stronger links with the YOS and have noted a change in the referral trend as the 16-18 age range are more likely to have problems that include anti-social behaviour, offending and gang related activity or be at risk of these difficulties. The team have met with Jenny Brennan from YOS and other community-based agencies working with this age group, which was productive and have another meeting to follow this up planned for March.
35. The Carelink service have had some disruptions over the last year, moving from the administrative base in East Dulwich in August – for some months there was additional pressure as there were difficulties with a clinical base and finding suitable and sufficient space to see children. This has now been resolved by the team having designated clinical space at the Lister Health Centre and we will be joining the CLA service at Curlew House in the near future for some administrative space, which will afford closer links with our CLA colleagues.
36. We have been involved in the two recent Ofsted inspections for Fostering and Adoption.

#### **Service user involvement - links with South London Gallery**

37. Carelink received a grant in early 2011 to run creative workshops with children and young people on referral. This two year project led to the development of a partnership between South London Gallery and Carelink involving the galleries artist workers, and use of their gallery 'The Clore Studio'. In total five groups ran between July and October. Three led by Carelink staff and two facilitated by artists.
38. Together the groups collaborated in an end of year exhibition on the 7th of December held at the Clore Studio for the children, carers, social workers and other professionals. Flyers and postcards were designed and created for the event and sent out to the children and carers to distribute, they were also placed in various venues and sent to all relevant professionals.
39. We are excited to say that both groups will continue to run alongside SLG this year. The first groups will be run in half term with further groups in the year.
40. We also continue our links with the Young Vic Theatre project and support our children attending the workshops in the half term holidays. These are important initiatives for the children and young people as they can build on the children's self esteem and help them develop a new interest in self expression and their creative abilities.
41. We continue to get regular feedback on our service from children, carers and members of the professional network. Overall the feedback is positive. We have made changes to our service delivery as a result of feedback. An example of this is that we now run our family therapy clinic later in the day so we can offer appointments outside of working day. This makes it easier for some parents to attend.
42. We continue to work closely with our colleagues in Social Care, Child Health, Education and other parts of the network to ensure that our resources are being used in an effective and efficient way. We appreciate good levels of multi agency co-operation to ensure the highest quality service for our children and young people.

43. We are keen to continue to develop and extend our service and appreciate feedback so we can constantly review the way we work. While we are compliant with most aspects for the NICE Guidance for looked after Children the one area that needs development is working with care leavers and transition into adult services. We do not have the resources to undertaking this work at the moment. We are currently putting in a bid for further research money to extend the under-5s screening.

### Community impact statement

44. Southwark CAMHS works to promote the health and well being for children in care which is a CYPP priority. It is recognised that placement, stability, and positive mental health help to build resilience in young people, and help to narrow the gap between outcomes for children in care and children in the general population.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

### AUDIT TRAIL

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<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	7 February 2012	

<b>Item No.</b> 11.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 21 February 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Looked After Children and Offending	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services	

### RECOMMENDATION

1. Corporate Parenting Committee notes the report which outlines service provision for Looked After Children who enter the care system as a result of offending behaviour.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. As at 31 March 2011 there were 522 children in care to the London Borough of Southwark.
3. There are several reasons in which young people can become known to both Youth Offending and Children Looked After (CLA) services including:
  - a. Magistrate courts will elect to remand a child into care prior to trial or sentencing if they feel a young person has a chaotic or inappropriate home environment which might lead to them not being sufficiently cared for in the community.
  - b. Young people who are already looked after engage in criminal activity
  - c. Young people who are taken into care on a voluntary basis under section 20 arrangements. Offending behaviour can sometimes be a catalyst and a feature for staying at home no longer being possible.
4. Each year Southwark is required to report to the Department of Education relating to youth offending patterns of looked after children who have been in care for twelve months or more. 53% (118) of young people on a statutory order in 2011 were recorded as having been in care at some point, 90 (41%) were currently in care.<sup>1</sup>
5. In February 2011 Southwark had its OFSTED unannounced inspection of contact referral and assessment. This unannounced inspection included the initial response provided for remands into care through the criminal justice system and how safeguarding issues are integrated into all assessment activity.
6. The result of the unannounced Ofsted inspection was extremely favourable identifying Southwark's referral and assessment services as "good" with no priority action.
7. There has been several policy changes within the Youth Justice System and

<sup>1</sup> This figure includes the total number of young people known to the YOS who's legal status is 'looked after' and doesn't differentiate between young people looked after by Southwark or out of borough

Looked After Children regulations which impact on how we deliver services to those children who are looked after and known to the Youth Offending Service. Amendments include changes to the CLA Legal Framework around Care Planning, Placement & Case Review regulations, (CA89 Vol.2) and legislation around visits in custody for former LAC regulations and guidance. Updated National Minimum Standards have also been made.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. Partnership working between the CLA service and Youth Offending Service has significantly improved over the last three years. The development of the joint planning process and protocol whereby managers from either service can convene a strategy meeting if they are concerned about the planning or crime prevention arrangements for any child in care is improving the effectiveness of both services and improving outcomes for the young person. This arrangement enables early recognition and intervention plans to be set in motion to avoid subsequent escalation and involvement of the risk management board.
9. Moreover, in order to gain an enhanced understanding of CLA issues and strengthen joint working a CLA team manager has been seconded into the Youth Offending Service since September 2011. The impact of this has been promising and joint working has continually improved over the last 12 months.
10. Protocols between the YOT and Children's Services was revised and implemented in September 2010. The protocol was updated in December 2011 following amendments to national legislation and local restructure. This includes an update of the protocol for joint planning and assessment between CLA and YOS for young people known to both services.
11. Evidence shows almost all of the initial assessments had been informed by contact with, or previous assessments from, children's social care. Copies of other relevant plans, e.g. care plans, are on file in 82% of the relevant cases.
12. Further work is underway to develop policy around the new regulations for young people to be remanded into care and to understand what the impact will be on the cost of this being transferred to the LA following the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment Bill currently being presented for debate before Parliament.
13. The Youth Offending Protocol outlines the following strategies for Southwark's children:
  - a. Youth Crime prevention
  - b. Work with children aged 13-18 years
  - c. Young people aged 14-17 at risk of offending or anti social behaviour
  - d. Pre court services for young offenders age 10-17
  - e. Young people appearing in court are made subject to court ordered interventions
  - f. Joint procedures relating to young offenders sentenced to custody
  - g. Protocols for looked after children
  - h. Management of Southwark looked after children placed outside the borough.
14. In addition to the agreed protocols there are a number of targeted partnerships between CLA Services and Youth Offending Services to provide a range of

preventative and intervention services for children in Southwark's care. These being:

#### **Screening Tool for CLA 13+**

The introduction, in October 2011, of a new screening tool for CLA 13 years and over is providing a more targeted, responsive service ensuring early signs of risks are identified and addressed. This includes assessing risks and interventions for substance misuse and youth offending which have an impact on a young person's safety. The information is also used to inform plans for looked after children which has considerably improved outcomes across the board. Enhanced monitoring for those identified as potentially at risk has been introduced as part of the Risk Management Panel responsibility and overseen at a service level by the Adolescence and After Care team manager.

#### **Risk Management Panel**

Southwark's youth offending service has a risk management panel attended by all Southwark's services involved with young people including the police. This panel identifies the most prolific youth offenders in Southwark or those presenting the most concern. The CLA Service is fully represented on the panel to ensure a fully integrated care planning approach where a looked after child might meet the panel's thresholds. This enables additional resources to be targeted in a coordinated way to identify looked after children to break the cycle of offending behavior and assist their re-engagement with core services. In addition Risk Management Panel also track high risk young people to ensure services are aware of change in circumstances and able to appropriately intervene at the earliest possible stage. A review of cases that have gone to Risk Management Panel show examples of these being helpful in bringing together a range of staff to address the assessment and planning for Risk of Harm issues.

#### **Resource Panel**

Introduced in July 2010 a newly established resource panel has been developed in Children's Specialist Services to manage the threshold for children entering the care system. The resource panel is chaired by the Head of Assessment and Safeguarding Service who has additional budgets and partnerships to target considerable family support resources where a child is at risk of entering the care system.

Initial evaluation of Resource Panel shows that the panel has the capacity to develop into an effective meeting to establish expertise about service delivery to prevent the need for young people to become looked after. Most cases were appropriately referred and most of these cases were referred in a timely fashion. However, there were some exceptions to this. The panel was able to assist in the deployment of resources including FGCs, ACT, Keyworking, YOS and TYS support.

#### **Research**

In September 2010 Southwark was one of four authorities in England which undertook research, in partnership with University of East Anglia, relating to offending patterns and looked after children. The report findings, published in September 2011, showed:

- that multiple risk factors at the individual, family, peer and community level interact and contribute to the risk of offending by young people in general and offending by looked after children in particular

- there are turning points which are developmentally and socially significant and affect the likelihood of children being taken into care, thriving in care and taking non-offending pathways.
- Interventions at all of these turning points and by a range of agencies can make a difference. Although early developmental harm is associated with poor outcomes, most areas of development can be subject to positive change if elements of the environment – which includes parents, families, schools, peer groups – change for the better.
- reliable and trusting relationships for young people in care is essential – not only in strong and supportive foster families but also in residential care and with a range of professionals, especially YOT workers and social workers / key workers involved in supporting young people through moves to semi-independence.

### **Discharge from Youth Offending Institutions**

Since the introduction of the new protocol the CLA service has not had a single occasion where a YOI Governor has had to express any concern relating to a discharge plan. The CLA service provided briefings for its Adolescent and Aftercare Service to ensure a greater understanding of statutory requirements and the need to deliver a discharge plan (including accommodation, support, education, finance and supervision) in a timely way.

### **Offending Rates for Looked After Children in long term care**

Offending by children who had been looked after continuously for 12 months as at end March 2011 and were aged over 10 years. Southwark ranks 7<sup>th</sup> out of 26 London boroughs. However, it is important to note that cohorts are very small, boroughs with very low numbers are not included in the analysis.

### **Drop In Service**

In January 2010 the Adolescent and Aftercare Service introduced a “drop in service” at the Youth Offending Service headquarters. The drop in service has been previously reported to the Corporate Parenting Committee as a key initiative to maintain contact with the most difficult to engage children from the age of 16-18 and care leavers aged 18-21. Whilst the drop in addresses issues relating to young people not in employment education and training, it also fulfils a key safeguarding issue. There is a link between looked after children (aged 16-18) who are not in employment, education and training and raised vulnerability to becoming involved in offending behaviour and gang related activity. Whilst attending young people can access advice from specialist nurses, employment advice, substance misuse teams, connexions and other support services (i.e. dental sessions). The drop in service is well supported by youth work services (TYS) who provide 15 hours senior youth work support a week.

15. Southwark’s strategy for substance misuse has commissioned “Insight” to target interventions for the most vulnerable groups. Children in care and young people known to the Youth Offending Service have been identified as a key group. This contract arrangement began in September 2010 with both Services being able to make direct referrals to Insight. In response, Insight places one of their team each week at the drop in to improve early referral and intervention arrangements (linkage between youth crime and substance misuse).

16. There are a number of young people being remanded into the care system due to gang related activity who cannot return home for a range of reasons. The looked after care service is not designed as a public protection system and we are therefore reviewing the system to better manage young people coming into care with significant gang related behavioural issues who either do not wish to be in care or are literally in fear for their lives. The impact of gang related activity is a council wide challenge and a significant amount of work is taking place locally under the leadership of the Safer Southwark Partnership.

#### **Specialist Fostering Arrangements**

In partnership with Southwark's commissioning service the CLA Service have commissioned specialist foster placements from the private and voluntary sector who are able to support and manage children in care with significant offending behaviours. In partnership with the Youth Offending Service a targeted carer specification was identified as part of the tender documentation. In January 2011, six independent fostering providers were approved to provide this service and the arrangements came into effect in March 2011. This has enabled the CLA service to consider placing children in care with offending behaviours in a family setting rather than in residential care.

Through the commissioning cycle, overseen by the CLA Strategic Commissioning Board, work is underway to review the impact of the current specification and further strengthen this for remand fostering facilities.

#### **Policy implications**

17. There are no policy implications as this report is a briefing relating to current legal framework and service delivery.

#### **Community impact statement**

18. The Children Looked After services works to promote all five of The Every Child Matters outcomes for children in care. It is recognised that placement stability, engagement in education, access to leisure activities and healthy lifestyles all help to build resilience in young people to avoid offending behaviour.
19. The Youth Offending Service and Looked After Children Service recognise that offending is a significant concern for the community and is subject to intense scrutiny, especially since the riots in August. The leadership for addressing youth crime issues in Southwark is lead by the Safer Southwark Partnership who deliver a range of specialist services and staff to provide targeted interventions for named children (team around the child approach).

#### **Resource implications**

19. The Children Looked After and Youth Offending Services are statutory agencies which are supported through core and central government grants. It is recognised that during the 2011/12 financial year the grant provision for the Youth Offending Service has been significantly reduced.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Previous corporate parenting committee agenda papers and key statistics for CLA	160 Tooley Street SE1 2TN	Jodie Harris, Strategy, Planning and Performance 020 7525 3967

**APPENDICES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
None	

**AUDIT TRAIL**

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Jodie Harris, Principal Strategy Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	3 February 2012	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		3 February 2012



<b>Item No.</b> 12.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 21 February 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Corporate Parenting Committee – Work plan 2011/12	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the corporate parenting committee review the work plan for 2011/12 as set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Role and function of the corporate parenting committee

2. The constitution for the municipal year 2011/2012 records the corporate parenting committee's role and functions are as follows:
  1. To secure real and sustained improvements in the life chances of looked after children, and to work within an annual programme to that end.
  2. To develop, monitor and review a corporate parenting strategy and work plan.
  3. To seek to ensure that the life chances of looked after children are maximised in terms of health educational attainment, and access to training and employment, to aid the transition to a secure and productive adulthood.
  4. To develop and co-ordinate a life chances strategy and work plan to improve the life chances of Southwark looked after children.
  5. To recommend ways in which more integrated services can be developed across all council departments, schools and the voluntary sector to lead towards better outcomes for looked after children.
  6. To ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable looked after children and young people to play an integral role in service planning and design, and that their views are regularly sought and acted upon.
  7. To ensure performance monitoring systems are in place, and regularly review performance data to ensure sustained performance improvements in outcomes for looked after children.
  8. To receive an annual report on the adoption and fostering services to monitor their effectiveness in providing safe and secure care for looked after children.
  9. To report to the council's cabinet on a twice yearly basis.
  10. To make recommendations to the relevant cabinet decision maker where responsibility for that particular function rests with the cabinet.
  11. To report to the scrutiny sub-committee with responsibility for children's services after each meeting.
  12. To appoint non-voting co-opted members.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

3. The corporate parenting committee agreed on 7 July 2010 to move towards thematic meetings and followed this framework for the remainder of the municipal year 2010/11. Additionally, the committee agreed at its meeting on 21 April 2010 that the 'enjoy and achieve' committee meeting would coincide with mid year performance review (November). The committee also agreed to receive 'on an exception basis' report/s of any significant variations evident from the monthly review of looked after children/care leavers.

### **Policy implications**

4. The policy agenda has been measured against the government's five "Every Child Matters" outcomes: Be Healthy; Stay Safe; Enjoy and Achieve; Make a Positive Contribution; Achieve Economic Well-Being. The committee's programme of work has been developed to meet these outcomes.

### **Future agenda items**

5. The following work plan sets out the allocation of items for future meetings. The committee may wish to review the scheduling.

## **21 February 2012**

### **Stay Safe Theme**

- Report on the outcome and any issues arising out of the fostering inspection
- Adoption Report including power point presentation
- Health issues facing children waiting for adoption – Dr. Anthony Tam to be invited to this meeting
- A report back setting out a detailed analysis ('deep dive') of the factors involved in the speed and placement of children for adoption
- Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual report
- Report from the Lead Commissioner (CAMHS) (Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services) on the impact of any proposed service reductions upon Carelink and its capability to deliver targeted interventions for children in care and foster carer support. The review to include impact on young people in gangs or at risk of gang activity.

## **23 April 2012**

### **Economic Wellbeing Theme**

- Unaccompanied minors (including request from April 2011 with regard to the feasibility and practicalities of the reference of minors to other boroughs legal teams (to utilise legal experience from other authorities on an independent basis)
- Adolescent and After Care Service
- Children Looked After (CLA) performance indicators for the Economic Wellbeing theme and wider performance data
- Report back on decision from April meeting to report back on the feasibility and practicalities of the reference of minors to other boroughs' legal teams (to utilise legal experience from other authorities on an independent basis)

- NEET Strategy (Not in Education, Employment or Training) (including university support, apprenticeships, coaching, drop-in services, connexions, Southwark Works and training partnership).

## July 2012

### Be Healthy Theme

- To receive the draft 2011/12 Young People's Substance Misuse Commissioning Update Treatment Plan for comment prior to its presentation to the Southwark Children and Families trust and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team Board
- Financial costings for extending the 16 plus transition phase (Carelink) and to mainstream more comprehensive work in respect of the work of the under 5's
- Report on the intergenerational review and the results to be reported back to corporate parenting committee (as requested under Designated Doctor for Children Looked After Annual report 2009/10 and Draft teenage pregnancy strategy items considered 22 September 2010)
- Annual Performance Report 2011/12
- That officers include as part of the 'Be Healthy' theme relating to HIV infection rates among young people in developed countries.

## September 2012

- Report back to committee to monitor the situation relating to any likely impacts on access to higher education in light of the change in the fee regime.

### Community impact statement

6. The work of the corporate parenting committee contributes to community cohesion and stability.

### Resource implications

7. There are no specific implications arising from this report.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Minutes of meetings of Corporate Parenting Committee	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street SE1 2QH	Bola Roberts 020 7525 7232

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
<b>Report Author</b>	Bola Roberts, Constitutional Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	6 February 2012	
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<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
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Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	6 February 2012	

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**CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST MUNICIPAL YEAR  
2011/12**

**NOTE:** Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to  
Bola Roberts 020 7525 7232

To	Copies	To	Copies
<b>Membership</b>		Constitutional Officer	10
Councillor Catherine McDonald	1 each	to Bola Roberts, Tooley Street	
Councillor Lisa Rajan		<b>Total:</b>	30
Councillor Barrie Hargrove			
Councillor Eliza Mann			
Councillor Claire Hickson			
Councillor Althea Smith			
Councillor Rosie Shimell			
<b>Reserves</b>			
Councillor Poddy Clark	1 each		
Councillor Patrick Diamond			
Councillor Helen Hayes			
Councillor Wilma Nelson			
<b>Co-opted members</b>			
Barbara Hills	1 each		
Gordon McCullough			
<b>Children's Services</b>			
Romi Bowen	1 each		
Rory Patterson			
Chris Saunders, Bradenham Close			
<b>Legal</b>			
Sarah Feasey	1		
		<b>Dated:</b> 13 February 2012	